

APPENDIX H

Grazing Allotment Categorization

The existing Selective Management Categories: Improve (I), Maintain (M), Custodial (C) are the foundation for designating allotment categories. The Selective Management Category process was initiated in 1982 and was used primarily to establish priorities for investing in range improvements. Criteria for the original designations can be found in Handbook 1740-1, Appendix 1, pages 3 and 4, and in the following table. Below are the criteria in addition to those found in Handbook 1740-1 that are to be used to designate allotments as Category I, M, or C. Allotments are categorized as appropriate and recorded in RAS. Allotments may be re-categorized as new information from monitoring, land health evaluations, habitat assessments, sensitive species data, etc. becomes available.

Assigning allotments to one of the three categories in accordance with the following criteria will help determine priorities for focusing staff and fiscal resources when processing grazing permits and leases, monitoring allotments, evaluating rangeland health, and implementing range improvements.

Category I: Allotments where current livestock grazing management or level of use on public land is, or is expected to be, a significant causal factor in the non-achievement of land health standards, or where a change in mandatory terms and conditions in the grazing authorization is or may be necessary. When identifying Category I allotments, review condition of critical habitat, conflicts with sage-grouse, and whether projects have been proposed specifically for implementing the land health initiatives.

Category M: Allotments where land health standards are met or where livestock grazing on public land is not a significant causal factor for not meeting the standards and current livestock management is in conformance with guidelines developed by the State Directors in consultation with Resource Advisory Councils. Allotments where an evaluation of land health standards has not been completed, but existing monitoring data indicates that resource conditions are satisfactory.

Category C: *Allotments where public lands produce less than 10 percent of the forage in the allotment, are less than 10 percent of the land area, or are equal to or less than 320 acres in size. An allotment should generally not be designated Category C if the public land in the allotment contains: 1) critical habitat for a threatened or endangered species, 2) wetlands negatively affected by livestock grazing.

*An exception to the percent land or forage base criteria for C Allotments may be allowed within the SD RMP Planning Area if the land ownership pattern limits the ability of BLM to manage it as an I or M Category Allotment, the Allotment is meeting standards for rangeland health, and the allotment does not contain critical habitat for a threatened or endangered species or wetlands negatively affected by livestock grazing.

